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Testimony to **Portland City Council** on the **Shelter to Housing Continuum Project, Recommended Draft**

The S2HC is a good beginning point for a city-wide conversation on how to address the ever-growing homeless problem. The current situation with unsanctioned camps all over the city has led to a deterioration in livability for all of Portland. Things need to change. Unfortunately, as written, the S2HC is not the answer. It is unbalanced in its remedies causing businesses, neighborhoods, parks, open spaces and schools to carry a heavy burden of the negative consequences it imposes. This is already happening, S2HC just legalizes it. Businesses are already leaving Portland. They cannot attract customers or employees with homeless camps, garbage and aggressive panhandling by their business establishments. S2HC does nothing to address this problem for our business community. Neighborhoods have seen a rise in crime when homeless camps appear. Besides garbage, noise and episodes of violence among campers, campers have threatened passersby, blocked cars and access to neighborhoods leaving residents feeling unsafe. S2HC will add to this problem. Our parks have taken a beating. Landscaping and fencing damaged, used syringes and human feces along with garbage have taken its toll on our parks. Playgrounds are largely unused due to parent's fear for the safety of their children. For many Portlanders parks are the only outdoor green space available to them in our large urban, densely populated city. Homeless camps compromise the feeling of safety in our parks. S2HC allows parks to be used for 180 days a year in an emergency. S2HC does not define "emergency". Camping near schools should never be allowed. Beside the garbage, used syringes and usual unsafe environment that camps produce, there is another danger. The camper's identities are not known, their mental health and or addiction issues are not known. It is a risk to the safety of school children to allow homeless camps by schools. The oversaturation of parts of the city with homeless camps is not addressed in S2HC. SE Portland has the over 80 reported homeless camps. The next closest is NE Portland with 40. Downtown is also over saturated with campers. This inequity is not addressed in S2HC. The S2HC provides no enforcement mechanism to mitigate health and safety issues in and around homeless camps. Established homeless shelters and camps can exclude guests who threatened the safety and peace of the other guests. Those troublemakers will be banished to the surrounding area. The business community and neighborhoods have no power to rid their community of these excluded problem homeless. S2HC as written, will accelerate the declining livability in Portland. Senior feeling unsafe will flee the city. Families convinced Portland is no longer a safe and healthy environment for their children will move out. Businesses will abandon any attempt of a successful enterprise in our city and leave. All will take their tax dollars with them. Please do not pass S2HC as written. TJ Browning

Laurelhurst N.A. Safety Chair

Testimony is presented without formatting.